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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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R 291608Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8581

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 LIMA 0897

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR,US, PE
SUBJ: CURRENT PERUVIAN PERCEPTION OF THE U.S.

REF: STATE 10605

1. I HAVE CONSULTED WITH INTERESTED MEMBERS OF THIS MISSION IN PREPARING THE FOLLOWING RESPONSE TO YOUR QUESTIONS ON HOW PERU CURRENTLY PERCEIVES U.S. POWER, POSTURE AND POLICIES. THE PERUVIAN REVOLUTION IS NOW SEVEN YEARS OLD. ONE OF ITS PRINCIPAL STATED GOALS IS TO END THIS COUNTRY'S "DEPENDANCE ON AND SUBSERVIENCE TO THE UNITED STATES". THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT SET THAT GOAL IN 1968 IN RESPONSE TO CONDITIONS AS IT PERCEIVED THEM AT THE TIME. HOWEVER, THE PHENOMENA YOU CITE -- WATERGATE, OUTCOME OF THE VIETNAM WAR, DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS, AND THE ANGOLA WAR -- WOULD BE SEEN WITHIN THE REVOLUTIONARY CONTEXT AS ADDITIONAL VINDICATION FOR GOP EFFORTS TO ADJUST ITS FORMER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S.

2. THE PERUVIAN CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IN AUGUST 1975 BROUGHT TO THE PRESIDENCY A MORE PRUDENT AND MODERATE LEADER THAN FORMER PRESIDENT VELASCO. THIS CHANGE COINCIDED WITH INCREASING ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES, WHICH HAVE APPARENTLY CONTRIBUTED TO A
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REALIZATION OF A NEED FOR A SLOWER APPROACH TO THE CONTINUING

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REVOLUTIONARY GOAL OF REDUCING TIES (ESPECIALLY ECONOMIC ONES) WITH THE U.S.

3. REVELATIONS OF U.S. INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES, APRTICULARLY IN CHILE, ARE OF SPECIAL INTEREST FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THIS NEIGHBORING, LEFTIST-ORIENTED COUNTRY. I BELIEVE THE NEW ADMINISTRATION OF MORALES BERMUDEZ IS NOT PARANOID ABOUT POSSIBLE U.S. "DESTABILIZING" ACTIVITIES HERE, BUT THERE ARE THOSE WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT AND WITHOUT WHO ARE STILL SUSPICIOUS THAT REVELATIONS CONCERNING CIA ACTIVITIES OR PLANS ELSEWHERE MAY SHOW THAT THE U.S. COULD BE UP TO SIMILAR ACTIVITIES HERE.

4. IN RESPONDING BELOW TO YOUR OTHER SPECIFIC QUESTIONS, I SOMETIMES DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THE OFFICIAL GOP LINE AND THINKING, THE PROBABLE PERCEPTIONS OF OTHERS BELOW THE POLICY-MAKING LEVEL IN GOVERNMENT, AND THE INFORMED PUBLIC. AS A GENERAL PROPOSITION, I THINK PERUVIANS STILL PERCEIVE THE U.S. AS A COLOSSUS -- FOR GOOD OR ILL, DEPENDING ON THEIR OWN POINT OF VIEW. AS TO PERCEPTIONS OF U.S. STRENGTHS AND VULNERABILITIES BASED ON THE VIETNAM OUTCOME, THE OFFICIAL GOP LINE (WHICH HAS NOT FORMALLY BEEN CHANGED SINCE VELASCO DAYS) IS THAT THE IMPERIALIST U.S. LOST A "WAR OF LIBERATION". THERE IS A WIDESPREAD PERCEPTION IN PERU (FOSTERED BY THE MEDIA) THAT NATIONALIST-COMMUNIST FORCES DEFEATED THE U.S. AND ITS ALLIES (OR CLIENTS OR LACKEYS) IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. TRADITIONAL MIDDLE CLASS GROUPS WHOSE POLITICAL STRENGTH WAS CENTERED IN THE APRA AND ACCION POPULAR PARTIES, TOGETHER WITH SOME MODERATE MILITARY OFFICERS, ARE RATHER PERPLEXED ABOUT PERCEIVED EROSION OF U.S. INTEREST OR WILL IN FOREIGN POLICY, WHICH THEY FEEL MANIFESTED ITSELF IN VIETNAM'S LATER STAGES.

5. THERE IS RESPECT AND ADMIRATION (OFTEN GRUDGING) FOR THE U.S. THROUGHOUT THIS COUNTRY. WATERGATE IS PERCEIVED AS AN INDICATION THAT THE U.S. CAN HAVE GOVERNMENT SCANDALS AS ANY NATION CAN. REVOLUTIONARY IDEOLOGUES CAN PERCEIVE A ROTTENNESS IN THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM, WHILE THE INFORMED PUBLIC, COGNIZANT OF PAST AND PRESENT PERUVIAN MORAL IMPERFECTIONS, PROBABLY WONDERS WHY SO MUCH FUSS WAS MADE ABOUT IT.

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6. THE VIETNAM OUTCOME HAS HAD NO NOTICEABLE EFFECT ON PERU'S VIEW OF U.S. ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO LIVE UP TO INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS. APART FROM PERIODIC CRITICISMS ON THE PAST "MONROE DOCTRINE" ROLE OF THE U.S., FEW BELIEVE THE U.S. HAS ANY SIGNIFICANT PRESENT-DAY COMMITMENT TO PERU OR OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. THOSE WHO ARE AWARE OF U.S. DEFENSE COMMITMENTS TOWARD THE HEMISPHERE AND TOWARD OTHER COUNTRIES PROBABLY BELIEVE WE CAN AND WILL

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HONOR THEM TO THE EXTENT WE CONTINUE TO VIEW THOSE
COMMITMENTS AS REFLECTING U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS.

7. AS TO DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS
IN TERMS OF U.S. ABILITY TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON ITS COMMITMENTS,
I BELIEVE FEW HERE BELIEVE THAT CONGRESS COULD BLOCK THE
ADMINISTRATION IF THE EXECUTIVE WERE DETERMINE TO INITIATE OR
CARRY OUT A PARTICULAR POLICY. THERE IS LITTLE PERCEPTION
HERE THAT CONGRESS PLAYED ANY SIGNIFICANT PART IN THE VIETNAM
WAR, IN WAGING IT OR LOSING IT. ADMINISTRATION/CONGRESS
DIFFERENCES DO NOT AFFECT PERU'S POSTURE REGARDING COOPERATION
WITH AND DEPENDENCE ON THE U.S.

8. GENERAL SPEAKING, THE GOP DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THE U.S.
POLITICAL PROCESS, AND DOES NOT APPRECIATE FULLY THE ROLE
PLAYED BY CONGRESS. THAT BEING SO, SOME WITHIN THE GOP MAY
PERCEIVE WHAT THEY CONSIDER TO BE EXECUTIVE INSINCERITY OR
HALF-HEARTEDNESS IN ATTEMPTS TO GET FOREIGN POLICY MEASURES
AFFECTING LATIN AMERICA THROUGH CONGRESS. THE GSP PROVISION
EXCLUDING OPEC MEMBERS, AND PARTICULARLY VENEZUELA AND
ECUADOR, IS A CASE IN POINT.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 LIMA 0897

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS

9. THE TRADITIONAL PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE OF COOPERATION
WITH THE U.S. CHANGED RADICALLY IN 1968, AND PERU'S PRESENT
"THIRD WORLD" ORIENTATION DATES ALMOST AS FAR BACK. THE FACTORS

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YOU CITE IN YOUR CABLE, IN THEMSELVES, ARE LIKELY TO HAVE LITTLE IMPACT ON GOP FOREIGN POLICY. RATHER, THEY SIMPLY TEND TO REINFORCE PREVAILING REVOLUTIONARY ATTITUDES THAT A CHANGE IN PERU'S TRADITIONAL POSTURE WAS LONG OVERDUE. IT STILL REMAINS TRUE, HOWEVER, DESPITE THE ANTI-U.S. BARRAGE IN THE GOV-ERNMENT-GUIDED PRESS, THAT THERE IS A RESERVOIR OF GOOD WILL TOWARDS THE U.S. AMONG INDIVIDUALS BOTH WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE GOVERNMENT. AT THE SAME TIME, THESE ELEMENTS HAVE VERY LIMITED INFLUENCE ON PERU'S FOREIGN POLICY, ESPECIALLY IN THE MULTILATERAL FIELD.

10. CUBAN AND U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA REINFORCES THE GOP'S DETERMINATION NOT TO BECOME INVOLVED IN ANY WAY. THIS ATTITUDE IS REFLECTED IN THE GOP'S REFUSAL TO DATE TO RECOGNIZE ANY OF THE WARRING FACTIONS IN ANGOLA AND ITS OBVIOUS PREFERENCE THAT THE FUTURE OF ANGOLA SHOULD BE SETTLED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE WITH THE SMALLEST DAMAGE TO THIRD WORLD UNITY. THE INFORMED PUBLIC PROBABLY SEES THE ANGOLAN SITUATION SIMPLY AS ONE IN WHICH THE U.S. IS BACKING ONE SIDE AND CUBA AND THE SOVIET UNION ANOTHER. PERU WILL PROBABLY SEE A DEFEAT FOR ONE SIDE AS A DEFEAT FOR ITS BACKERS. THE PRESS, WHICH IS HEAVILY LEFTIST-
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INFILTRATED, CAN BE EXPECTED TO PLAY UP A DEFEAT FOR THE U.S.-BACKED SIDE, IF THAT IS THE WAY THE ANGOLA AFFAIR TURNS OUT. THE CUBAN INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA MAY BE MILDLY DISTURBING TO THE GOP, WHICH ESPOUSES THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-INTERVENTION. THE CUBAN RELATIONSHIP WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO BE AN IMPORTANT BUT SOMEWHAT UNCOMFORTABLE ONE FOR THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT.

11. THE GOP SEES LATIN AMERICAN "STRENGTH THROUGH UNION" IN DEALING WITH THE U.S. THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT IS AN ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORTER OF SELA AND HAS SOUGHT TO PROMOTE U.S.-LATIN AMERICAN CONFRONTATIONS IN THE OAS AND ELSEWHERE. WITHIN LARGER FORA, SUCH AS THE UNIDO AND THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE, BOTH OF WHICH PERU HOSTED RECENTLY, THE GOP TAKES CARE NOT TO GO SO FAR AS TO PROVOKE SPECIFIC BILATERAL U.S. RETALIATION.

12. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT GOP PERCEPTIONS OF THE U.S. HAVE CHANGED RECENTLY SO AS TO INFLUENCE ITS VOTING POSITION IN THE UN OR OTHER INTERNATIONAL FORA. THE GOP CONTINUES TO WANT TO RELY LESS ON THE U.S. AND CONTINUES TO ASPIRE TO LEADERSHIP IN THE THIRD WORLD, BUT IT HAS TAKEN A CAUTIOUS APPROACH ON QUESTIONS SUCH AS THE KOREA ISSUE, AND THE ZIONISM/RACISM RESOLUTION AND RADICAL EFFORTS TO EXCLUDE ISRAEL FROM THE UNGA.

13. SINCE 1968, THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT HAS SOUGHT TO WIDEN ITS INTERNATIONAL SOURCES OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SUPPORT. IT RECEIVES ASSISTANCE FROM FIRST WORLD AND SECOND

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WORLD COUNTRIES AND THERE ARE EVEN LIMITED PROSPECTS FOR THIRD WORLD ASSISTANCE FROM THE ARABS. PERU SIMILARLY HAS A WIDE RANGE OF COMMERCIAL ARRANGEMENTS BESIDES THOSE IT HAS WITH THE U.S. I DOUBT THAT PERU CAN OR WILL ATTEMPT TO REDUCE ITS SALES OF RAW MATERIALS TO THE U.S. BUT MAY WELL SEEK BY WITH-HOLDING EXPORTS TO INCREASE THEIR PRICE. AS TO THE SALE OF U.S. PRODUCTS HERE, THE GOP WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE EFFORTS TO DISCOURAGE IMPORTS, PARTICULARLY "NON-ESSENTIAL" IMPORTS FROM THE U.S., FOR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REASONS. HOWEVER, CONSUMERS WILL CONTINUE TO WANT U.S.-PRODUCED GOODS, AND PERUVIAN PRODUCERS WILL CONTINUE TO REQUIRE U.S. IMPORTS.

14. THE GOP PROBABLY BELIEVES THAT THE U.S. IS NOT WHOLLY WILLING TO MEET THE NEEDS AND CONCERNS OF DEVELOPING NATIONS,
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ALTHOUGH IT PROBABLY HAS LITTLE DOUBT OF U.S. ABILITY TO DO SO. REVOLUTIONARY IDEOLOGY IS THAT THE U.S. IS AT LEAST MORALLY, IF INDEED NOT LEGALLY, BOUND TO HELP COUNTRIES SUCH AS PERU, GIVEN THE HISTORY OF U.S. "ECONOMIC IMPERIALISM". IT IS IN PART TO PRESSURE THE U.S. TO MEET THAT PERCEIVED OBLIGATION THAT PERU COOPERATES SO WHOLE-HEARTEDLY WITH THE GROUP OF 77, UNIDO AND SELA.

15. IN SUM, THE GOP FOLLOWS ITS REVOLUTIONARY PRECEPTS AND COOPERATES CLOSELY WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE THIRD WORLD FOR REASONS THAT PRE-DATE U.S. TROUBLES OF THE LAST YEAR OR SO, BUT THOSE PROBLEMS REINFORCE THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT'S PREVAILING ATTITUDES.
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